



Downtown Service Area Master Plan and Downtown Public Realm Framework Plan

TAC Meeting #5: Small Group Exercise Summary

The goal of the small group exercise was to identify future users of downtown parks and public space; new activities that could draw people to the parks and public spaces; and finally ideas on what a space for downtown workers would include. [See [PPT Pages 42-43](#)]

Group 1

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Group 2

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Group 3

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Group 4

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Area A

- Luncheon and green respite with mature trees
- Skate park for teens and tweens
- Family and dog oriented parks
- Enhance connections to Boom Island
- Target Field Station needs development around it/better use of space
- Green space for families with young children
- Connect to river
- Parks could be provocative and innovative; possibly more hardscape, less traditional
- Daylight Bassett Creek
- Something past Washington, a play area
- Greener, soften industrial feel
- Container park (Downtown Las Vegas has this)
- Underpass Park (Toronto has this)
- Welcoming public spaces with activity, programming and signage
- Places to eat

Area B

- Future Royalston Station offers opportunity
- Public restrooms, water fountains, and weather shelter needed

The **Downtown Public Realm Framework Plan** is a thematic plan led by the City. It is a policy document focused on guiding the enhancement of priority streets and public spaces. It will provide a unified vision to inform and coordinate public and private investments in the public realm.

The **Downtown Service Area Master Plan**, let by the MPRB, will set the vision for future park and recreation development in the downtown area, and establish a new, urban model for service delivery, maintenance, funding, and operation of parks in downtown Minneapolis.



Area C

- Connect Nicollet Mall and Eat Street via land bridge
- Extend transit/street car

Area D

- Technology
- Parks could be an experience, like the Highline and horticultural tourism
- Adventure park for toddlers and kids
- Triangle park: children activities, play structure
- Dog park
- Safer, less submerged park
- Destination park
- Places for kids to be together
- Tie Elliot Park and the Commons together
- Security in Elliot Park
- Plaza needed that could be used midday and evening
- Better wayfinding, especially for visitors who want to get to Nicollet Mall
- Clear, pedestrian-friendly connections to river
- Interpretive elements

Area E

- Connection needed to Elliot Park via East Commons and the river, especially via bike

Area F

- Land bridge offers opportunity for retail and desegregation of neighborhood
- College of Design working on idea of real estate development to build land bridge
- Access to happy hours, shopping, theater

Area G

- Cascading gardens/anchor point for access
- Dog park
- Break in public/private
- Currently has a visitor focus
- Magnet, views to and across river: should be able to see Grain Belt sign
- Improve river access
- Area acts as hinge
- Playground
- Currently feels uninviting and cold
- Remove post office parking ramp



Existing Parks

- More regular free concerts
- Basic workout equipment (Loring Park, along the river)
- Activities with youth, pair with Farmer's Market; on weekends, along the river
- Visitor connection to Loring Park needed
- Grant Street as connector/green/protected bike lane
- Beacon to draw people to Loring Park
- Food/refectory/concessions/restaurant at Loring Park
- Boom Island: use for large-scale recreation needs like soccer; need better connection for running loops from area A to Boom Island

Non-MPRB Owned Spaces

- Yoga, dance lessons or lunch time activities (Nicollet Hotel Block, East Commons)
- Mid-day concerts (central location, Peavey Plaza, East Commons, Nicollet Hotel block, private plazas)
- Places to eat/Parklets where there are food trucks (i.e. Peavey Plaza, Marquette Ave)

Other Ideas

- Conference room in a park
- Access to food/beverage
- Splash park/water features
- Wayfinding by lighting, beacons/landscape, painted trails that show a journey, i.e. 'how to get to the river?'
- Community signage
- Visitors should be able to easily get to riverfront, could get there via Portland Ave: ability to walk, explore, follow loops
- Park adoption to improve safety and cleanliness
- Marquette: food trucks and parklets
- Skyway parks: open air, sliding doors and windows, connect with rooftops
- Portland Ave and other roads: pedestrian friendly, interpretive opportunities
- Land bridge examples: Columbus, OH; Florence, IT; downtown Dallas, TX
- Would like to see large trees downtown: create site lines to large trees
- Daylight gutter system to see where water goes
- Better, easier-to-use website: help people find activities downtown
- Wayfinding by time to location, i.e. how long it takes to walk to a certain destination
- Want more activated areas
- Surface parking lots sap vitality from street: people need to be drawn from block to block and parking lots hinder this
- Art, cultural programming
- Ropes course, rock climbing



Question #1: *Imagine the downtown parks and public spaces 20 years from now: who is there using them? What are they doing?*

Who?

- Downtown residents
- Workers
- Visitors
- More diverse community
- Newcomers and recent transplants
- Increased number of residents (especially areas A, G, and riverfront)
- Demographic shifts: more residents, more hotels/visitors (area D)
- Retirees/baby boomers, people of color and youth populations will increase
- Will people stay (in area A) as their kids age?
- Young worker demographics (area A)

What?

- People-watching
- 'Best conference rooms in city are in the parks'
- Charging devices
- Running in downtown
- Community gardening and 'yard-like' activities
- Outdoor activities for kids, i.e. adventure playgrounds, visually stimulating activities
- Community building/gathering/social networking
- Parks connections will be improved, safer
- Year-round activities
- Scaling to the usage
- Inclusive programming and partnerships; 'building, lighting and displays'
- Need for green spaces/playgrounds to address more people living downtown
- Open spaces, flexible spaces
- Food/coffee
- Variety to avoid stagnancy
- Tennis/basketball courts
- Concerts
- More development along LRT corridors, in particular housing
- Streetcars will shape corridors
- Role of U of MN? Increase connectivity
- Increased programming
- Commerce in parks

Question #2: *What types of new activities would bring different people to the downtown parks and public spaces? [See above]*



Question #3: *If you were creating the perfect space just for downtown workers, what would it look like/include? Where would it be? What about downtown residents? Visitors?*

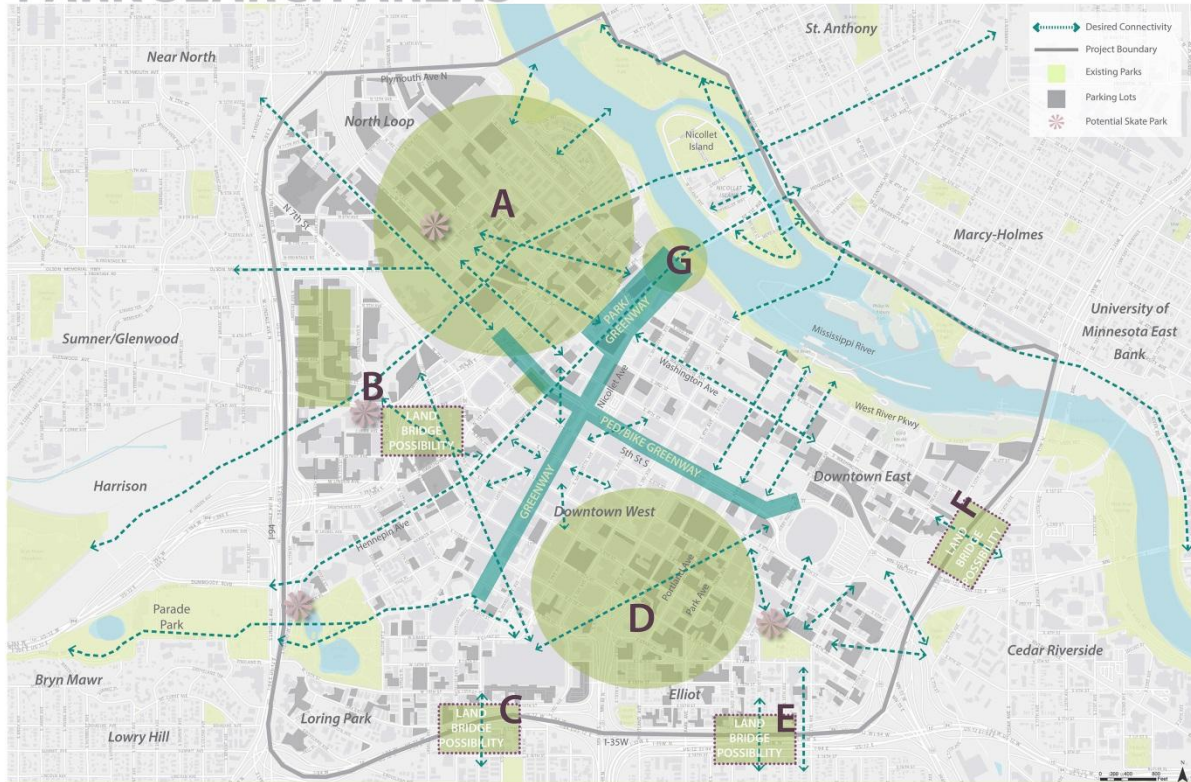
Workers:

- Shade
- Horseshoes/Bocce Ball (quick games, no sweating)
- Places to eat lunch
- Bike parking
- Transit access
- Childcare
- Bathrooms (many major cities have public bathrooms)
- Need crossings and intersections that feel safe for pedestrians; particularly unsafe intersections include:
 - Washington/Hennepin
 - 5th Ave at Washington; creates a car funnel, cars don't want to yield to peds
 - Pedestrian connections from North Loop to farmer's market and International Market Square feel unsafe

Visitors:

- Focus on river
- Portland Ave connection to river
- Options and loops

PARK SEARCH AREAS



Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Downtown Service Area Master Plan
City of Minneapolis CPED Downtown Public Realm Framework Plan

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